

Social and Cultural Aspects in Harry Potter Sorcerer's Stone

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas aspek sosial dan budaya yang ditampilkan dalam Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone karya J.K. Rowling. Di luar narasi fantasinya, novel ini menggambarkan isu-isu sosial dunia nyata seperti dinamika keluarga, perundungan, identitas pribadi, kelas sosial, dan prasangka budaya baik di dunia sihir maupun non-sihir. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi bagaimana lingkungan sosial, interaksi dengan teman sebaya, pengaruh institusi, dan norma budaya membentuk perkembangan karakter, khususnya tokoh utama, Harry Potter. Analisis ini menyoroti bagaimana novel tersebut mencerminkan warisan budaya Inggris, termasuk sistem kelas, struktur pendidikan, dan tradisi, serta isu diskriminasi berdasarkan status darah. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi dalam memahami bagaimana sastra populer berfungsi sebagai media untuk merepresentasikan dan mengkritik realitas sosial dan budaya.

Keyword: Aspek Sosial; Aspek Budaya; Unsur Ekstrinsik

ABSTRACT

This article examines the social and cultural aspects shown in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling. Beyond its fantasy narrative, the novel portrays real-world social issues such as family dynamics, bullying, personal identity, social class, and cultural prejudice within both the magical and non-magical worlds. Through a qualitative approach using library research, this study identifies how social environments, peer interactions, institutional influences, and cultural norms shape character development, particularly that of the protagonist, Harry Potter. The analysis highlights how the novel reflects British cultural heritage, including the class system, educational structures, and traditions, as well as issues of discrimination based on blood status. This study contributes to understanding how popular literature serves as a medium for representing and critiquing social and cultural realities.

Keyword: Social Aspects; Cultural Aspects; Extrinsic Elements

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1. INTRODUCTION

What makes a fantasy story feel so real? Despite its magical setting, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone presents social and cultural issues that mirror everyday life. Literature has long served as a reflection of society, capturing human experiences, values, and cultural realities through storytelling. Among literary forms, prose fiction often explores not only imaginary narratives but also real-world social issues embedded within the story. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling is an example of such literature that, beyond its fantasy elements, mirrors complex social and cultural dynamics.

According to (Klarer, 2004) prose is defined as written or spoken language that imitates the rhythm of natural speech, often used to narrate both fictional and factual events. Furthermore, (Wellek and Warren, 1949) emphasize that prose fiction systematically presents characters, settings, and plot, which are influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. (Nurgiyantoro, 2010) explains that extrinsic factors encompass values, ideologies, and social conditions external to the text that nevertheless shape the narrative.

This article focuses on the extrinsic elements present in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, particularly the social and cultural aspects reflected in the story. Themes such as family dynamics, social class, cultural prejudice, identity formation, and peer influence are explored, providing insight into the social realities embedded within the wizarding world. By analyzing these aspects, this study aims to demonstrate how popular literature functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for representing and critiquing real-world social and cultural conditions.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Data collection was conducted using library research method. According to (Sarwono, 2006) "Literature study is an activity of examining various reference books and similar previous research results that are useful for obtaining a theoretical foundation regarding the problem to be investigated." In this article, the author uses many references such as books, internet website sources, etc.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling, extrinsic social factors those originating from the character's environment and social interactions play a crucial role in shaping Harry's development. These influences include his family background, peer relationships, societal norms, and institutional guidance. This article explores how these extrinsic social elements affect Harry's growth, identity formation, and moral choices.

A. Social Aspects

1) Family Influence

Family serves as the earliest and often most significant source of socialization. In Harry's case, he is shaped by two contrasting family environments: the Dursleys and the Weasleys.

a) The Dursleys: A Negative Influence

Harry's aunt and uncle, the Dursleys, treat him with cruelty and disdain. They make him live in a cupboard, isolate him, and constantly favor their son Dudley. This abusive upbringing fosters in Harry a sense of humility and resilience, and perhaps most importantly, a desire to escape into a better world. It also teaches him early on what injustice feels like.

"Harry was used to spiders, because the cupboard under the stairs was full of them, and that was where he slept." (Chapter 2)

This deprivation paradoxically strengthens Harry's character and gives him a deep appreciation for kindness when he finally experiences it.

b) The Weasleys: A Model of Warmth

In comparison, the Weasley family represents friendliness, kindness, and openness. Though not wealthy, they are emotionally rich and treat Harry as one of their own. Mrs. Weasley's immediate affection offers Harry a glimpse of what a loving family feels like.

"She hugged him. 'You must be Harry, dear.'" (Chapter 6)

This warmth becomes foundational in shaping Harry's loyalty to his friends and to the greater wizarding community.

2) Peer Influence

Peers play a critical role during adolescence, especially in shaping identity and behavior through social reinforcement.

a) Ron and Hermione: Positive Reinforcement

Ron and Hermione not only become Harry's best friends but also his moral anchors. Through their friendship, Harry learns about loyalty, cooperation, and the strength of teamwork. Their collective effort in facing the trials to reach the Sorcerer's Stone underscores the power of unity.

In Chapter 16, the trio solves various magical challenges, relying on each other's strengths.

Ron's emotional support and Hermione's intellect complement Harry's bravery, helping him become more well-rounded.

b) Draco Malfoy: A Negative Peer Influence

Draco offers a path defined by prejudice, elitism, and manipulation. Early in their relationship, Draco tries to persuade Harry to judge people based on their blood status.

"You'll soon find out some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter." (Chapter 6)

Harry's rejection of Draco's offer marks a key moment where peer pressure fails, showing that Harry is beginning to form his own ethical framework, guided more by empathy than social status.

3) The Dursleys: A Negative Influence

The wizarding world is structured by various cultural norms and hierarchies that significantly impact characters' experiences.

a) The House System at Hogwarts

The division of students into houses based on personality traits is a powerful extrinsic influence. Harry is nearly placed in Slytherin but ultimately chooses Gryffindor.

“Not Slytherin, not Slytherin,” said Harry in a whisper. (Chapter 7)

Being sorted into Gryffindor aligns him with values such as bravery and loyalty, setting expectations for his actions throughout the novel. It also puts him in direct opposition to Slytherin students, reinforcing group dynamics that shape his identity and choices.

b) Blood Status Prejudice

The wizarding world is stratified by magical bloodlines—pure-bloods, half-bloods, and Muggle-borns. Hermione, being Muggle-born, is often insulted by Draco and others.

“You’ll soon find out that some wizarding families are better than others, Potter.” (Malfoy, Chapter 6)

This discrimination becomes an important lens through which Harry understands inequality and injustice. Unlike many of his peers, Harry never judges others by their heritage, partly because of his own outsider status.

4) Institutional Influence: Dumbledore and Hogwarts

Institutions like Hogwarts and figures like Dumbledore represent formal structures that guide moral and intellectual growth.

a) Hogwarts as a Social Institution

Hogwarts isn't merely an educational institution; it's an organized setting where guidelines, incentives, and control influence actions. The experiences students undergo from classes to competitions like the House Cup encourage personal and social development.

The points given for courage at the conclusion of the book impacts how students feel motivated and supports Harry's beliefs.

b) Dumbledore as a Moral Guide

Professor Dumbledore acts as a mentor whose wisdom often directs Harry's reflections and decisions. He doesn't just enforce discipline but teaches life lessons.

“It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live.” (Dumbledore, Chapter 12)

His guidance teaches Harry about courage, humility, and the importance of choices.

B. Cultural Extrinsic

1) British Cultural Heritage

The book by Rowling is strongly influenced by British traditions, including the locations, the way people talk, the schools, and the social classes.

a) Boarding School System

Hogwarts reflects the traditional British boarding school model, with houses (Gryffindor, Slytherin, etc.), uniforms, prefects, and house points—all mirroring real-world elite schools like Eton or Harrow.

“There are four houses at Hogwarts... Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin.” (Chapter 7)

This system emphasizes competition, discipline, and character development, reflecting the value placed on education and hierarchy in British society.

b) British Class Structure

In the magical world, there are obvious separations that reflect the class system found in Britain:

- The Malfoys symbolize the high society—rich, pure-blooded, and snobbish.
- The Weasleys are seen as lower-middle-class—loving and moral but financially poor.
- Harry balances different worlds: brought up in an environment of indifference, but gains riches and respect in the magical community.

This cultural framework shapes how characters view each other and informs much of the conflict between “pure-bloods” and “Muggle-borns.”

2) Magical Culture and Norms

The wizarding world has its own internal culture, built around unique traditions, holidays, education, and social behaviors that function as extrinsic cultural elements.

a) Wizarding Traditions

Magical culture includes many rituals and holidays, such as:

- The Sorting Ceremony: a significant event that determines the direction of one's future
- Halloween and Christmas at Hogwarts: These celebrations blend real-world holidays with magical customs, grounding the fantasy in familiar traditions.

“There was a loud ‘Ooooooh!’ as a hundred broomsticks rose suddenly into the air.” (Chapter 10 — Halloween feast with floating pumpkins)

- b) Sports Culture: Quidditch
Quidditch is a major part of wizarding culture and has cultural significance similar to football in the Muggle world. It unifies the school, sparks rivalries, and defines status.
“*Harry Potter, the youngest Seeker in a century.*” (Chapter 10)
His role on the team elevates his social standing and reinforces his identity within Gryffindor.
- 3) Cultural Prejudices and Superiority Beliefs
The idea of “*blood purity*” is central to wizarding society and draws clear parallels with racism and social elitism in the real world.
 - a) Blood Status Ideology
This belief system separates people into:
 - Pure-bloods (e.g., Malfoys),
 - Half-bloods (e.g., Harry),
 - Muggle-borns (e.g., Hermione).
 Characters like Draco Malfoy embody cultural prejudice, treating Muggle-borns as inferior:
“*You’ll soon find out that some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter.*” (Chapter 6)
This prejudice creates institutional and social barriers that reflect real-world systems of oppression, such as racial or caste hierarchies.
 - 4) Language, Symbols, and Identity
Language, naming, and symbols in the novel reflect deeper cultural meanings.
 - a) Names and Cultural References
 - Names like Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape draw on Latin and classical roots, enhancing a feeling of old-world academia and mysticism.
 - Hogwarts, Diagon Alley, and The Ministry of Magic sound distinctly British and archaic, reinforcing the cultural backdrop of a hidden magical world.
 - b) Symbols
 - The Sorting Hat represents the tradition of predetermined destiny and identity.
 - Wands symbolize magical ability and personal empowerment, yet are also linked to cultural hierarchy (e.g., wand cores and wood types).
 - 5) Gender Roles and Cultural Expectations
While Rowling attempts to create strong female characters like Hermione, cultural expectations still influence roles.
 - Hermione Granger is often dismissed early on for being a “know-it-all,” a reflection of how smart girls are sometimes culturally marginalized.
 - Professor McGonagall embodies the authoritative female figure, yet the majority of powerful figures (Dumbledore, Snape, Quirrell) are male, suggesting some residual patriarchal norms.
 “*I hope you’re pleased with yourselves. We could all have been killed — or worse, expelled.*” (Hermione, Chapter 9)
Her priorities valuing rules and grades reflect academic and cultural expectations of high-achieving students, particularly females.

4. CONCLUSION

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone presents more than a fantasy adventure it reflects the powerful influence of social and cultural forces on personal growth. Through Harry’s journey, we see how family dynamics, friendships, school systems, and societal norms shape his identity and moral choices. Cultural elements like British traditions, class structures, and magical customs further enrich the story, making the wizarding world feel both unique and familiar. Together, these extrinsic social and cultural factors highlight important themes such as prejudice, belonging, and the value of courage and friendship, offering meaningful lessons beneath the magic.

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